

# 150 Demonstrate Against OU Racism Van Horn Agrees to Harassment Policy

Chip Minty • Published: September 29, 1990 •

NORMAN About 150 students demonstrating against racism on the University of Oklahoma campus forced a meeting with university president Richard Van Horn Friday, but student leaders walked away only partly satisfied.

Van Horn, meeting with about six students in his office, agreed to establish a university policy against racial harassment.

The students said they were told a new policy would be adopted in January.

However, university officials released no official statement Friday.

Despite Van Horn's promise, students remained skeptical.

The administration has not been responsive to racial problems in the past even though they occur everywhere on campus, said David Burgess, OU chapter president of the National Panhellenic Council, a national governing body for black Greek organizations.

Racism on campus is easy to spot, Burgess said.

"It's in the campus newspaper, in the classroom, in activities and in the Greek system. It's in every phase of this university," he said.

Students last spring asked Van Horn to adopt a policy against racial harassment, but no action was taken, said Mark Maxey, a Tulsa junior and a Yuchi Indian.

Burgess said, "Until something is done ... I don't think the minority population should be satisfied."

Demonstrations will continue until a policy is adopted, Maxey said.

He said the students want the policy to allow punishment for racial violence and harassment.

The students plan another demonstration today as football fans crowed onto campus to watch the Sooners host the University of Kansas at Owen Field.

During Friday morning's demonstration, American Indian, black, Hispanic and Asian students were joined by some white students and faculty members to form a circle outside the administration building.

They chanted slogans and sang songs for more than three hours, catching the attention of hundreds of people walking by.

Demonstrators yelled "stop racism" and "OU needs minorities," and they sang "We Shall Overcome."

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Maxey said anger among the students has been growing, but that recent harassment by members of two fraternities sparked action.

In separate incidents within the past month, members of two OU fraternities broke beer bottles at the Jim Thorpe MultiCultural Center at 600 Elm, said Shannon Freeman, assistant director of minority student services.

The most recent incident occurred during a dance on Sept. 21, she said.

Members of one fraternity yelled derogatory remarks and threw beer bottles into the center's parking lot, she said.

Norris Williams, director of minority student services, said there is a wave of racial tension hitting college campuses across the country.

Within the last five years, several large state universities have adopted policies on racism, he said.

Williams said he believes the students have made a strong statement about what they want and he hopes something can be done. BIOG: NAME:

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